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Representation of Native peoples in picture books about Christopher Columbus: A literary analysis

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Representation of Native peoples in picture books about Christopher Columbus: A literary analysis

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Abstract

This qualitative content analysis analyzes how Native peoples and their culture are represented in 21 children's picture books published between 2008-2019, written for students in grades K-4, about Christopher Columbus or Columbus Day. The books were evaluated using Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) framework: "How to Tell the Difference: A Checklist for Evaluating Children's Books for Anti-Indian Bias." This study found that books in the sample did not represent Native peoples well, with only four books having positive and detailed representations overall. The most common offense in the sample was a stereotypical portrayal of Native people. This study concluded that one cannot solely rely on Children's Core (2020) recommendations and TitleWave (2020) reviews to provide books that accurately represent Native peoples, and that librarians and educators should seek additional tools to find quality representations of Native peoples in literature. This is even more imperative if books about Columbus are going to be added to libraries and classrooms despite our updated understanding of his role in the tyranny of colonization.

REPRESENTATION OF NATIVE PEOPLES IN PICTURE BOOKS ABOUT
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS: A LITERARY ANALYSIS

A Graduate Research Paper
Submitted to the
Division of School Library Studies
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by
Mari Butler Abry
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative content analysis analyzes how Native peoples and their culture are represented in 21 children's picture books published between 2008-2019, written for students in grades K-4, about Christopher Columbus or Columbus Day. The books were evaluated using Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) framework: "How to Tell the Difference: A Checklist for Evaluating Children's Books for Anti-Indian Bias." This study found that books in the sample did not represent Native peoples well, with only four books having positive and detailed representations overall. The most common offense in the sample was a stereotypical portrayal of Native people. This study concluded that one cannot solely rely on *Children's Core* (2020) recommendations and *TitleWave* (2020) reviews to provide books that accurately represent Native peoples, and that librarians and educators should seek additional tools to find quality representations of Native peoples in literature. This is even more imperative if books about Columbus are going to be added to libraries and classrooms despite our updated understanding of his role in the tyranny of colonization.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Ignorance on the part of the non-Native population, about our history, cultures, and lives, remains near-total. The images of Indians found in children's literature have always reflected that informance; they have not changed appreciably over the last 40 years... Are you tired of hearing it, from one "minority" or another? Does it make any difference, a few people arguing over the content of some children's books? After all, while the stereotypes may be exaggerations, don't they have some basis in fact? No, I promise you, they do not. (Slapin and Seale, 1992, pp. 12, 14)

Justification of Problem

This study will analyze the representation and cultural portrayal of Native peoples in children's picture books pertaining to Christopher Columbus or Columbus Day. This study defines picture books using Desai's (2014) definition: books targeting grades K-4 with a predominance of pictures to accompany words; these books are usually around 32 pages. The study offers suggestions and frameworks for educators and librarians to use when assessing literature pertaining to Native peoples and Christopher Columbus. In a broader context, this study seeks to educate readers about the dangers of single-sided, whitewashed historical storytelling.

This study uses the terms "Native peoples" and "Native Americans" to refer to Indigeneous peoples of North, Central, and South America. I understand that the various labels given to Native peoples can be problematic and minimizing. While it is best practice to use

specific tribe names when discussing Native peoples (Meyer, 2011, p. 2; Quigley, 2016, p. 364), it is not practical in the scope of this study to use specific tribe names in all cases, especially when discussing the portrayal of Native Americans in general. When it is known, tribe names will be used. The terms “Native American,” and “Native peoples” are used interchangeably to match the language used in various studies.

The American Association of School Librarians (2018) clearly outlines its expectations for librarians to maintain diverse collections in its crosswalk of the AASL National School Library Standards and characteristics of Future Ready Libraries. “Future Ready” librarians are directed to “create inclusive collections that acknowledge and celebrate diverse experiences” (p. 1). The standard, under Shared Foundation V: Explore and the Think Domain, directs librarians to expose students to multiple viewpoints by “challenging learners to reflect and question assumptions and possible misconceptions” (p. 9). Since many children’s texts about Columbus underline his heroic conquests while minimizing the culture and experiences of the Tainos, librarians have their work cut out for them.

Native Stereotypes in Literature

Past research has shown that the representation of Native Americans and their culture in literature continues to be stereotypical (Sanchez, 2001). Researchers also know that it’s important for children to see accurate representations of themselves in the literature they read. When representations of Native Americans are riddled with stereotypes, this important aspect of seeing oneself represented in literature is nullified and can be more damaging (Bishop, 1990; Tschida, Ryan, & Swenson, 2014). There are books for children that accurately represent Native American tribes and their cultures (Meyer, 2011; McNair, 2016), so educators and librarians

must select texts that enrich and enhance a student's knowledge and accurately reflect the lives of those depicted in them, not enforce ill-informed stereotypes.

Literature as “Mirrors”

Children need literature to act as “mirrors,” accurately reflecting their lives back at them as a form of affirmation (Bishop, 1990). Researchers know that there are alarmingly few Native American characters represented in popular publishers' picks for children (Hughes-Hassell & Cox, 2010; Chaudhri & Schau, 2016). In best practice, librarians need to make intentional decisions about selecting books that include Native American characters and feature Native American authors. The combination of the frequency of representation with the accuracy of that portrayal creates the opportunity for children to be exposed to worlds and characters that they otherwise may not experience in real life. When books expose children to these worlds, it's important that the representation is accurate (Bishop, 1990; Tschida, Ryan, & Swenson, 2014).

Counter Storytelling

Counter storytelling is “a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told” (Solorzano & Yosso, qtd. in Manglitz, Guy, & Merriweather Hunn, 2006, para. 2). Without effective counter storytelling, single-sided narratives dominate history, especially in topics pertaining to Columbus (Sanchez, 2001). Counter storytelling provides diverse viewpoints that more accurately reflect history (Manglitz, Guy, & Merriweather Hunn, 2006), and in the case of stories about Columbus, counter storytelling can teach students more about the rich lives and culture of the Taino and other tribes before conquistadors arrived and colonization took place. If students are constantly subjected to picture books that “begin and end with the assumption that Columbus is and must remain a hero,” (Desai, 2014, p. 194) a

degradation of the cultures he encountered occurs, while Euro-centric idealism persists.

Children's picture books about history should offer more than idolization of European figures.

Rationale

Children's books featuring Native Americans continually perpetuate stereotypes, lack fair representation, and are comprised of single-sided, white-centric versions of history. For this reason, children's books about Christopher Columbus must be assessed for their quality of representation of the Taino and their culture. Librarians and educators need the tools with which to analyze picture books about Columbus. In some cases, librarians and educators need to know which books to remove from their shelves because of inaccurate representations.

Uncertainty and Deficiencies

Researchers have previously studied the historical accuracy and idolization of Columbus in children's books (Desai, 2014), the way Native Americans are depicted in literature (Slapin & Seale, 1992; Sanchez, 2001; Thompson, 2001; Quigley, 2016; Slapin and Seale, 2005), and the frequency of Native American appearances in children's literature (Hughes-Hassell, 2010; Chaudhri & Schau, 2016). This study seeks not to evaluate the historical accuracy of books about Columbus, but to analyze the quality of representation of Native peoples, mainly the Tainos, and the depiction of their culture in a more modern subset of books. Previous studies have not analyzed recent publications or books that come recommended to librarians through the tools available to them, i.e. the *Children's Core Collection* from Ebsco (2020). This study analyzes newer titles and the sample was selected using professional discovery tools instead of by random sampling. This study perpetuates the continuous analysis of children's literature that is needed if librarians and educators seek to purchase and use materials of high quality surrounding a

problematic holiday. The analysis of newly published books also provides additional insight into improvements made in racial equity regarding those represented within stories about Columbus. The results of this study should be used in tandem with other studies that examine historical accuracy in books about Columbus.

Summary of Problem Statement

Native Americans and their culture are frequently represented inaccurately in children's picture books.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative content analysis is to analyze how Native peoples and their culture are represented in children's picture books, targeting students in grades K-4, about Christopher Columbus or Columbus Day.

Research Questions

This research addresses the following questions:

- 1) How are Native characters portrayed in children's books about Christopher Columbus?
- 2) How is Native culture portrayed in children's books about Christopher Columbus?

Assumptions and Limitations

This study assumes that there is still improvement to be made in the overall representation of Native peoples in children's literature and that the study of books about a problematic holiday is useful to address some of these needed improvements.

This study is limited in that it is conducted by one teacher librarian who is not of Native American descent; similar research conducted by a person of Native descent could have a different analysis of the same content. It is recognized that qualitative content analysis can be

subjective and is limited by what the researcher knows about a topic. This study is also limited to a small subset of books.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this qualitative content analysis is to analyze how Native Americans and their culture are portrayed in children's books, targeting students in grades K-4, about Christopher Columbus or Columbus Day. Three sub themes emerge when considering this analysis: How Native Americans are currently portrayed in literature, the importance of literature as "mirrors" for children, and the impact of counter storytelling. In order to understand what to look for when assessing how Native peoples are portrayed in books about Columbus, it is important to observe what others have studied about the stereotypical portrayal of Native people. In order to understand why it is important for literature to be accurate reflections for readers, the concept of literature as windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors was explored. Finally, it is nearly impossible to discuss literature pertaining to Native Americans without considering the importance of counter storytelling, as most Native history has been documented by white people.

Native Stereotypes in Literature

Thompson (2001) analyzed the stereotypes of Native peoples that literary, educational, and legal institutions have perpetuated. The literary aspect of the study was comprised of novels from 1995-2000. Various themes or categories Thompson examined in the study overall included: Perils on the frontier, racism in court, captivity narratives, and reviewers and novelists. Thompson concluded that literature, educational institutions, and the precedents set by judicial systems in the past have contributed to the perpetuation of stereotypes of Native peoples. Thompson, therefore, urged educators to take books that perpetuate stereotypes off shelves. Thompson writes, "Leaving the books on the shelves for the study of non-Native presentations of

Natives, no matter the harm these works do to Amerind children and no matter how forcefully these works perpetuate damaging stereotypes, once again leaves the focus on Whites and white culture” (p. 369). Thompson argued that adult guidance of books with stereotypical portrayals is not enough, as most adults lack the background or content knowledge needed to address stereotypes appropriately, largely due to racism in literary, educational, and legal institutions.

The idea that no book is better than a book perpetuating stereotypes was also supported by Doris Seale and her colleague Beverly Slapin in their extensive studies and compilations of essays and analyses about Native American content in children’s literature (Slapin & Seale, 1992; Slapin, Seale, & Gonzalez, 1992; Slapin & Seale, 2005). In *Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children* (1992), Slapin and Seale examined children’s literature that featured Native American content or characters and they featured essays by Native Americans about what it is like to read about their culture portrayed in a negative way. One stereotypical portrayal they examined was the image of the whooping Indian, eager to scalp his victims. Slapin and Seale featured an essay entitled, “Taking Another Look,” by Mary Gloyne Byler (pp. 81-87), which revealed that Puritans actually offered rewards for Native scalps, and that a Massachusetts colony offered the equivalent of \$200 for male Indian scalps and \$100 for women and children scalps. They explain that while some Natives did participate in scalping victims, it was almost never depicted in literature that they did so in exchange for payment from the French and English who offered rewards for white scalps (p. 85). Slapin and Seale’s research demonstrated that children’s literature is riddled with damaging stereotypes of Native Americans.

Quigley (2016), a Native woman, studied literature depicting Native peoples after Minnesota added standards that required public schools to include Native American culture and literature in school curriculum. After her child brought home *Caddy Woodlawn*, which depicted Native males speaking broken English and Native females without speaking parts at all, Quigley determined the need to assess the texts her school district used to meet the new Minnesota state standards. In her assessment, she focused on first-encounters that readers had with Native characters. She paid special attention to the non-verbal parts of Indian characters, wondering, “If an Indian character doesn’t speak, what does he or she say?” (p. 368). Quigley concluded that not only were the books taught in her district perpetuating stereotypes of Native Americans, they also promoted misogyny through the especially woeful depiction and lack of voice of female Native characters. Like Thompson (2001) and Slapin & Seale (1992, 2005), Quigley advocated for removing books like these from the curriculum.

Mirrors in Literature

Bishop (1990) laid a framework through which researchers and educators can evaluate the quality of literature through the power it holds to represent readers’ lives and expose readers to new experiences. Though from the 1990’s, the framework is still frequently cited in literary analysis research and is vital to consider when weighing the importance of the reflection books provide for their readers. In her often referenced article, “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors,” Bishop emphasized the importance of children being able to find themselves in the books they read. Bishop theorized that books are most effective as “mirrors,” reflecting a reader’s life back at them, creating affirmation. Bishop also theorized that books can be windows or sliding glass doors through which readers look at or step into other worlds. Bishop warned of

the dangers that inaccurate representations provide to children: “When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part” (para. 4). Bishop’s framework serves as a strong reminder to librarians and educators that it is their duty to assess children’s literature through the lens of relatability through accurate portrayals.

Recent studies have shown that there are problems with two basic elements of affirming literature for Native American children: (lack of) the sheer numbers of Native protagonists, and (lack of) Native authors and illustrators of children’s books. A study conducted in 2010 by Hughes-Hassell and Cox examined 218 board books written for children from 2003-2008. Their study examined the representation of diverse characters and authors and illustrators of board books published during that time; they sampled books that specifically included diverse characters. While the sample yielded different numbers for characters of other ethnicities, they found that only two books from their sampling contained an image of a Native person -- a book in the “global” category (showing depictions of infants from around the world) pictured an American Indian infant, and *Me Quieres, Mama* featured an Alaskan Native. They also found a lack of representation of Native American authors and illustrators in their sample. Of the books studied, none were written or illustrated by people who were identified as Native American. Hughes-Hassell and Cox explained, “*Me Quieres, Mama*, the only book to feature an Alaskan Native child and her mother, was written and illustrated by white individuals” (Findings section, para. 12). Studies like this one show that Native American children may have a difficult time finding books that reflect and affirm their lives.

Other studies have shown that books with the potential to serve as mirrors for Native American children are sometimes clouded by stereotypes. Sanchez (2001) examined 20 trade books selected at random from the Native American section at the library of the Ackerman Center for Democratic Citizenship at Purdue University; publication dates ranged from 1964-1997. Books were assessed based on their depiction of the Five Great Values of most Native cultures (based on research by Reiten in 1995) which are: Generosity and sharing, respect for elders and women, getting along with nature, individual freedom and leadership, and courage. Results showed that more than half (60%) of the sample represented at least some aspect of Native American culture positively and accurately. It did not mean, however, that the books were without bias and stereotypes. Sanchez's study showed that while there are books about Native Americans to exist as windows and mirrors for children, stereotypical portrayals of Native Americans continue to cloud them, making them poor or distorted affirmations for Native children.

Chaudhri and Schau's (2016) more recent study found that in the 2012-13 school year, books from the Scholastic Readers Club order form (one of the most popular among elementary classrooms) did not offer children authentic reflections of Native American culture or characters. Chaudhri and Schau analyzed Scholastic order forms for one year, collecting quantitative data on the frequency with which books including Native Americans appeared, and qualitative data in the assessment of those Native American characters when they were present. They concluded that "the few books with Native American content Scholastic offers young readers are woefully misrepresentative of culturally authentic Native American experiences" (p. 33). While some Native American characters were present in the Scholastic books offered, many

were secondary to white characters, were depicted in stereotypical roles, or were used for the purpose of supporting Euro-centric stories of colonization. This stunning flaw of Scholastic book orders begs the question: What message is sent when Native children do not have access to books as mirrors? The literature that librarians and educators provide to children must be scrutinized with this focus in mind.

Counter Storytelling

At the 36th Annual Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults, Manglitz, Guy, and Merriweather Hunn (2006) presented their research on the educational and research framework of counter storytelling and its impact. They explained that counter storytelling is the idea of telling stories of marginalized or under-represented groups in an effort to “undermine racism” (para. 3), and that it can be used in conjunction with Critical Race Theory (para. 4). Manglitz, Guy, and Merriweather Hunn concluded that the issue of race and racism has largely been absent from adult educational institutions, and that the infusion and study of counter stories would have positive impacts on cross-cultural research and research methods (Implications for Adult Education section, para. 4-5). This research influences me to question whose story is being told in picture books about Columbus: The Native peoples’, or Columbus’?

In Slapin and Seale’s (1992) extensive studies of the portrayal of Native Americans in children’s literature, they also addressed counter storytelling. Seale provided a view of what it is like for Native peoples to read about themselves portrayed in distorted ways, written by others. Seale explained:

As a Native woman, it doesn't seem to me a lot to ask that the books written about Indians be honest, if nothing else. This is not so simple as it sounds. Very few non-Native writers have bothered to acquire the knowledge to produce meaningful work about our history, culture and lives - although this ignorance does not stop them from doing the books, *and getting published...* In fact, Indians are the only Americans whose history has been set down almost exclusively by those who are not members of the group about which they are writing. (p. 10)

The quote above demonstrated Seale's personal drive to complete her research on the topic. Slapin and Seale's collected works included historical research that demonstrated to readers that without effective counter storytelling, single-sided, white narratives dominated the Columbus story. Their article entitled "The Bloody Trail of Columbus Day," emphasized historical information that was frequently left out of traditional Columbus Day narratives. Their historical research included the fact that tribes did not readily surrender to Columbus upon his arrival; that native peoples' hands were cut off if they could not provide the amount of gold Columbus demanded of them; and that tribesmen who ran away from the Spanish were hunted by dogs who were trained to kill. And finally, "One by one, all of the indigenous leaders were tortured, impaled, hanged, burned at the stake. Then mass suicides began" (pp. 6-7). Slapin and Seale's research concluded that picture books should not traumatize children, but they also should not avoid the truth or (in some cases) lie. In current applications, the obvious need for counter stories about Columbus is overwhelming; librarians and educators must be aware of whose story is being told in books featuring Native Americans.

Desai's (2014) study explained that once children have been exposed to white-washed narratives, it becomes increasingly difficult to reverse those ideas, even when counter stories are presented later in life. Desai studied 32 children's books, published between 1992 and 2012 that told the Columbus story. Desai concluded that picture books from 1992-2012 "have seen little change in the Columbus myth" (p. 194). Instead of picture books that accurately portray Columbus's conquests, they "tip in his favor, minimizing the evils of slavery, torture, and imperialism and their effects on indigenous peoples and their environment" (p. 194). Desai's findings showed that picture books about Columbus are still not telling the Native perspective. Instead, the stories reflect the political views and interests of the people who write them. Manglitz, Guy, and Merriweather Hunn (2006), Slapin and Seale (1992), and Desai's (2014) research shows that over the last 20-some years, single-sided, white narratives tell stories over which they have no authority or experience to tell; it, then, becomes the duty of librarians and educators to assess literature through a more critical lens.

Summary

With frameworks developed by Bishop (1990), Slapin and Seale (1992), and Manglitz, Guy, and Merriweather Hunn (2006), it is possible to analyze the quality of the representation of Native peoples in children's books. Previous studies have shown that the use of these frameworks can help researchers understand what stereotypes of Native Americans look like in literature (Thompson, 2001; Quigley, 2016) and assess the quality of the representation of people and their culture (Sanchez, 2001; Hughes-Hassell & Cox, 2010). Picture books about Columbus, in particular, need further analysis to determine the message children receive from them. Studies and frameworks like these help me to analyze these questions: How are Native characters

portrayed in children's books about Christopher Columbus, and how is Native culture portrayed in children's books about Christopher Columbus? This study seeks answers to these questions, which in turn will provide insight for librarians and educators.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Since previous studies show the continuous need for research about how Native Americans are depicted in literature, this study's purpose was to analyze how Native peoples and their culture are represented in children's picture books, targeting students in grades K-4, about Christopher Columbus or Columbus Day. This study explored the following questions:

- 1) How are Native characters portrayed in children's books about Christopher Columbus?
- 2) How is Native culture portrayed in children's books about Christopher Columbus?

Research Design

This study used a qualitative content analysis and a directed analysis of content approach. Qualitative content analysis is described by Wildemuth (2017) as a method that goes beyond counting words or occurrences of content; qualitative content analysis seeks to "examine meanings, themes, and patterns that may be manifest or latent in a particular text. It allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner" (p. 318). Directed analysis of content, specifically, uses previous frameworks or theories on which researchers base their analysis and coding (Wildemuth, 2017, p. 319).

Qualitative content analysis is suited to this study and its research questions as it is a method appropriate for examining texts through coding and the analysis of themes. Wildemuth (2017) explains that qualitative content analysis is "grounded in the examination of topics and themes," (p. 319) which matches this study's examination of the depiction of Native peoples and their culture. Wildemuth also explains that qualitative content analysis uses "purposively selected texts" instead of a random sampling (p. 319). Since this study seeks to examine books about

Columbus, this method is appropriate. As there is a fitting framework already developed through which researchers can analyze Native content, directed analysis of content is an obvious approach to achieve this study's goals. Finally, this study used Wildemuth's 8-step process of qualitative content analysis studies to ensure its legitimacy.

Sample of Books

Qualitative content analysis utilizes texts that are purposely selected based on what the researcher wants to know (Wildemuth, 2017, p. 320). Step 1 of qualitative content analysis studies outlined by Wildemuth (2017) is to prepare the data (in this case, books) by purposely selecting texts (p. 320). This study's sample of 21 books was purposely selected from *Ebsco's Children's Core Collection* (2020), a database used by librarians to discover recommended texts and reviews of those texts in considering what to purchase, and *TitleWave* (2020), an online tool in association with Follett School Solutions through which librarians can examine materials and their accompanying reviews for purchase. These two tools were used to select the book sample because they are among the most commonly employed by librarians for collection updates. The *Children's Core Collection* was examined first, as it has the reputation of providing the most reputable suggestions for librarians; books are not included in the *Core* without positive reviews accompanying them. *TitleWave* was used as a secondary tool in order to find additional texts and their reviews, mimicking the approach often taken in professional practice.

This study's sample included books published between 2008 and 2019. This study sought to analyze the most recently published books on this subject, based on what practicing teacher librarians would buy. The terms "Christopher Columbus" and "Columbus Day" were searched in both the *Children's Core Collection* (2020) and *TitleWave* (2020). It should be noted that the

more modern holiday, “Indigenous Peoples’ Day” was searched in both the *Children’s Core Collection* and *TitleWave* without any results for picture books. Hence, all books that were selected surrounding the holiday are named “Columbus Day.” Books within the publication range were selected automatically if they were classified as “supplementary,” “core,” or “highly recommended” by the *Children’s Core Collection*, or if they came with one or more positive reviews from *TitleWave*. Texts were not used if they were classified as “archival” in the *Children’s Core Collection*, or if they had one or more negative reviews in *TitleWave* (in practice, librarians are unlikely to purchase books listed as “archival” or with negative reviews). The *Children’s Core Collection* yielded only three titles that met this study’s sample criteria. An additional four titles were selected automatically from *TitleWave* because of their inclusion of positive reviews (see Table 1).

Additional titles in this study’s sample did not have reviews associated with them at the time of this study. Many trade books in *TitleWave* (2020), for example, did not include a review. Excluding titles without reviews would have made the study sample less informative (only seven books would have qualified), thus trade books lacking reviews in *TitleWave* were included in the sample and are noted in Table 1. *TitleWave* offers information about texts such as target grade levels, lexile, Accelerated Reader range, publisher notes, and book previews; these elements were consulted for books without reviews, keeping in line with what librarians would consult in actual practice when purchasing books without reviews. If a text in *TitleWave* did not include a review, attention was paid to the publication date (favoring recent publications) and the target audience (favoring texts classified in *TitleWave* as grades K-3 over 4-6). The selection of 21 books that comprise this study’s sample are shown in Table 1.

It should be noted that one book, *Christopher Columbus: Sailing to America* by Jane Bingham (2017), did fit this study's sample but was not able to be examined due to its location. After consulting *WorldCat*, a database showing the location of books around the world in libraries who are *WorldCat* members, it was found that Bingham's book was located in one library in Texas, and the rest were overseas primarily in Britain, Australia, or New Zealand. Therefore, this qualifying book was not included in the final sample since it was not easily attainable. The reasons for its exclusion would also make it less likely that librarians would purchase it.

Table 1

Sample of Selected Children's Books

Core Collection Titles (3 titles)	<i>Columbus</i> by Demi; 2012 <i>Columbus Reaches the New World</i> by Valerie Bodden; 2009	<i>Columbus's Chart</i> (Stories of Great People) by Gerry Bailey; 2008
TitleWave titles with positive reviews (4 titles)	<i>A Journey with Christopher Columbus</i> (Primary Source Explorers) by Stuart Kallen; 2018 <i>Christopher Columbus</i> (What You Didn't Know About History) by Michael Rajczak; 2015	<i>Let's Celebrate Columbus Day</i> (Holidays & Heroes) by Barbara DeRubertis; 2014 <i>Christopher Columbus: New World Explorer or Fortune Finder?</i> (Fact Finders: Perspective on History) by Jessica Gunderson; 2014
TitleWave titles without reviews (14 titles)	<i>Why Do We Celebrate Columbus Day?</i> (Celebrating U.S. Holidays) by Darnell Petersen; 2019 <i>Who Was Christopher Columbus?</i> 6-8; Children's Biography Books (2nd Grade Biography) by Baby Professor; 2018 <i>Columbus Day</i> (Story of Our Holidays) by Joanna Ponto; 2017 <i>Columbus Day</i> (Let's Read! Let's Celebrate American Holidays) by Aaron Carr; 2015 <i>Christopher Columbus and Neil Armstrong</i> by Nick Hunter; 2015 <i>Christopher Columbus</i> (Rookie Biographies) by Mary Dodson Wade; 2015 <i>You Wouldn't Want to Sail with Christopher Columbus</i> by Fiona Macdonald; 2014	<i>Explore with Christopher Columbus</i> (Travel with the Great Explorers) by Cynthia O'Brien; 2014 <i>Christopher Columbus</i> (America, My Country: Explorers) by Moira Rose Donohue; 2013 <i>The True Story of Christopher Columbus</i> (What Really Happened?) by Susanna Keller; 2013 <i>Columbus Day</i> (American Holidays) by Connor Dayton; 2012 <i>Columbus Day</i> (Celebrations in My World) by Molly Aloian; 2010 <i>Columbus Day</i> (First Step Nonfiction: American Holidays) by Robin Nelson; 2010 <i>What's So Great About Columbus?</i> (Robbie Reader) by Amie Jane Leavitt; 2008

Procedures

Data Sources

This study's method was designed to analyze texts with the objective of looking for themes in a greater social context, following Step 2 of qualitative content analysis research (Wildemuth, 2017, pp. 318-320). The books in Table 1 were analyzed using Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) framework, "How to Tell the Difference: A Checklist for Evaluating Children's Books for Anti-Indian Bias" (see Appendix A). Though Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's framework is from 1992, the checklist is succinct, easy to apply, and remains relevant. For example, their work was consulted in Sanchez's (2001), Thompson's (2001), Chaudhri and Schau's (2016), and Quigley's (2016) research about Native American representation in literature. In using this framework, this study followed a directed analysis of content approach, which is one approach of qualitative content analysis and aligns with Wildemuth's (2017) Step 3 of qualitative content analysis research (pp. 319, 321).

Data Analysis

Once the texts were secured per Step 1, I looked "for the expression of a single idea," not just a single word or phrase. In this way, coding was assigned "to a text chunk of any size, as long as that chunk represent[ed] a single theme or issue of relevance" (Wildemuth, 2017, p. 320). This type of coding followed Wildemuth's Step 2 by identifying the coding unit in the text as an idea or theme, not a word on a page. Step 3 was followed when the coding scheme was determined by Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) checklist. The 11 categories of coding derived from Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez were: stereotypes in children's play; stereotypes in naming; stereotypes as savages, primitive, or extinct; stereotypes in generalizations; stereotypes

in art; loaded words; tokenism; culture - narrative tone; culture - distortion and religion; culture - ethnocentric focuses; and authenticity (see Appendix A).

Given the complexity of the 11 categories of coding and the 21 books analyzed, I designed a point system to provide an intentional initial assessment of quality. Books with one or more instances of a negative category represented (determined by the category's definition) were given a point of -1, while instances of a positive category were given a point of +1. Multiple points were not awarded for multiple instances in a book. In this way, a category could only score +1 or -1. If a book had negative and positive instances of the same category, the resulting score was zero. If a book did not have any instances of a category, no points were awarded. A book with a negative representation in every category would receive a score of -11. A book that had every positive category represented would receive a score of +9. The points were not equal due to Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) descriptions of the categories; two categories in their checklist provided only negative descriptions instead of negative and positive ones. Since I did not alter Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's words, there was a difference between positive and negative point totals. (See Appendix A for a breakdown of the categories and point values; the point discrepancy is shown in the category breakdown.)

In keeping with Wildemuth's (2017) Step 3 and the nature of the directed analysis of content approach, coding categories were derived entirely from Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) framework. Some categories from the full framework were excluded from this study's evaluative tool for the purpose of keeping the focus on the representation and culture of Native peoples. Categories excluded from this research tool included two that pertained to respectful language and stereotypes (Is "E" for "Eskimo" or "I" for "Indian" in ABC books, and in

counting books, are “Indians” counted) as those categories were represented by others that were used in this study. Categories targeting distortions of history were also excluded, since this study did not seek to analyze historical accuracy, but cultural authenticity. Additionally, the “Authenticity” category used in this study addressed historical accuracy and bias. Historical distortion categories that were excluded include: the use of words like “victory,” “conquest,” or “massacre”; Native peoples accepting defeat passively; and Native heroes aiding Europeans in the conquest of their own people. Other categories from Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez’s original framework not used in this study include: Dialogue, standards of (modern) success, and the role of women. While some of these categories, such as the use of dialogue and the role of women, could go with this study’s overarching theme of the representation of Native peoples in a broader context, the study would be too expansive if more categories were analyzed. I did not change Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez’s category description wording, but I did add my own titles for each category for the purpose of clarification and analysis.

In keeping with Wildemuth’s (2017) Step 4, I tested the coding scheme and point system on three books from the sample to determine the framework’s validity and consistency. The three texts used to test the coding scheme and accompanying point system were: *A Journey with Christopher Columbus* by Kallen (2018), *Columbus Day* by Nelson (2010), and *What You Didn’t Know About History: Christopher Columbus* by Rajczak (2015). At first, there was some confusion with the category “Stereotypes in generalizations.” I confused it with “Tokenism” because of the wording, “Are Native people all one color, one style?” (Slapin, Seale, & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 9). After consideration, I concluded that the “Stereotypes in generalizations” category was describing generalizing Native culture and various tribes, not individual tribes and

characters depicted in art, like the tokenism category. Adjustments were made to any information recorded in error within the “Stereotypes in generalizations” category. After initial refinements, I found the coding scheme and point system consistent and pursued coding the remaining texts.

Once initial testing was complete, all texts were read and coded, following Wildemuth’s Step 5 (2017, p. 322). I read books twice, once all the way through, and once to code. I recorded notes for each category. After texts were coded, I checked them once more at a later date (at least a day after), keeping with Wildemuth’s Step 6; I checked for coding consistency and researcher bias (p. 322). When all texts were coded and assessed for consistency and bias, I followed Wildemuth’s Step 7 by examining the data, “making sense of the themes or categories... identifying relationships between categories, uncovering patterns, and testing categories against the full range of data” (p. 322). Findings and conclusions were reported in Chapter 4 and 5 of this paper, following Wildemuth’s Step 8 (p. 322).

Limitations

One limitation of qualitative content analysis is that its “success will rely almost wholly on your [the researcher’s] reasoning abilities” (Wildemuth, 2017, p. 322). This study was conducted by one researcher, which does limit the scope of analysis. Qualitative content analysis is also limited by what a coder knows about a topic; the coder’s “knowledge and experience [has] significant impact on the credibility of research results” (p. 323). To help solidify this study’s validity, “precise coding definitions and clear procedures” were implemented (p. 323).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This qualitative content analysis study's purpose was to analyze how Native peoples and their culture are represented in 21 children's picture books, targeting students in grades K-4, about Christopher Columbus or Columbus Day. Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) 11 categories are grouped here, in order to answer the two research questions. An overview of the books' scores are discussed first. Research question 1 asked how Native characters were portrayed. The portrayal of Native characters is discussed in the following order: (1) Stereotypes in art; (2) tokenism in art; (3) savagery; (4) children playing "Indian;" and (5) ridiculous names. Research question 2 asked how Native cultures were portrayed. The portrayal of Native culture is discussed through the following categories of Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) checklist: (6) Alive vs. extinct cultures; (7) complex vs. simple societies; (8) accurate portrayals of religion vs. superstitious portrayals of religion; and (9) uniqueness vs. sameness of different tribes. Finally, the narrative tone, which impacts the representation of both Native characters and their culture, is analyzed with the following categories: (10) Eurocentric focuses and (11) respectful language.

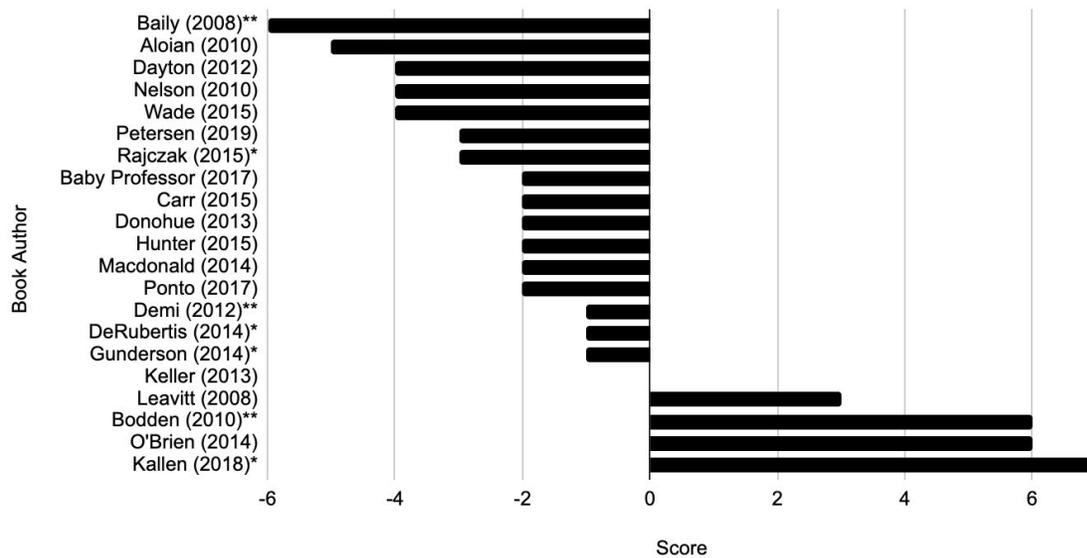
Overview of Scores

Before I analyze each category in detail, I will provide an overview of how books scored overall. To review, each category of Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) framework was given a value of -1, +1, or 0 based on the negative or positive representation of that category. A book with every positive category represented could earn a maximum score of 9. Books with every negative category represented could earn a maximum negative score of -11. (See Appendix A for

a breakdown of categories and points; see the Procedures section in Chapter 3 for a more detailed explanation of categories and points.) Figure 1 shows the overall score of each book using this system.

Figure 1

Overall Book Scores of the Representation of Native Peoples and their Culture



** Denotes books recommended by Ebsco's Children's Core Collection

* Denotes books with positive reviews in TitleWave (books with negative reviews were not selected for the sample)

No star denotes books without reviews but present in TitleWave search results

Of the 21 books studied, only 4 of them (19%) scored higher than 0, meaning only 4 books contained accurate and positive representations of Native peoples and/or their culture overall, outweighing any negative representations that may have been present. *The True Story of Christopher Columbus* (Keller, 2013), earned a score of 0, being neither positive nor negative in its overall representation of Native peoples and/or cultures. The remaining 16 books with negative scores may have contained some positive representations of Native peoples and their

culture, but these were cancelled out, in effect, by the presence of poor or negative representations.

Research Question 1: Portrayal of Native Characters

Stereotypes and Tokenism in Art

Stereotypes in art and tokenism in art were 2 of the 11 categories of Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) framework used to analyze the visual depiction of Natives in this study's sample. Of the books sampled, 16 of 21 (76.2%) had a stereotypical visual portrayal of Native characters or used tokenism of some form (see Table 2 for the titles of those 16 books). Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's tool used to code the sample defines tokenism as: "Native people depicted as stereotypically alike... look[ing] just like whites with brown faces" (p. 12). This problem arose multiple times due to the use of the same historic art throughout the sample of books. One of the most frequently used artworks was "Christopher Columbus with Native Americans" by D. K. Bonatti, available for purchase from Getty Images, Magnolia Box, and other vendors. This art shows Native people with faces that look exactly like white faces, matching Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's definition of tokenism. Also displayed in Bonatti's art is a "mishmash of 'generic Indian designs'" (p. 10), another definition of stereotypical representation in Slapin, Seale and Gonzalez's categories. The "mishmash" of designs includes zigzags, dots, and lines to make clothing look "native," which trivializes and disrespects Native art and culture.

This study found that even if illustrators created their own art, stereotypical portrayals and tokenism still occurred. The author Demi, for example, produced their own art, but it still showed Native faces as identical, and exactly alike to whites. While some may argue that this is an artistic style, it is the exact definition of Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) tokenism

category. It should be noted that even two of the highest scoring books by Bodden (2010) and O'Brien (2014) demonstrate tokenism due to their use of historic art, despite their accurate and detailed positive representations of Native peoples in other areas (see Table 2).

Table 2

The Presence of Tokenism in Book Sample

Book Authors Order by Score	Score	Tokenism Portrayed	"Generic Indian" designs
Baily (2008)**	-6	✓	
Aloian (2010)	-5	✓	✓
Dayton (2012)	-4	✓	✓
Nelson (2010)	-4	✓	✓
Wade (2015)	-4	✓	
Petersen (2019)	-3	✓	✓
Rajczak (2015)*	-3		
Baby Professor (2017)	-2	✓	✓
Carr (2015)	-2		
Donohue (2013)	-2	✓	
Hunter (2015)	-2	✓	✓
Ponto (2017)	-2	✓	✓
Macdonald (2014)	-3	✓	✓
Demi (2012)**	-1	✓	
DeRubertis (2014)*	-1	✓	✓
Gunderson (2014)*	-1	✓	
Keller (2013)	0		
Leavitt (2008)	3		
Bodden (2010)**	6	✓	
O'Brien (2014)	6	✓	
Kallen (2018)*	7		

** Denotes books recommended by Ebsco's Children's Core Collection

* Denotes books with positive reviews in TitleWave (books with negative reviews were not selected for the sample)

No star denotes books without reviews but present in TitleWave search results

Savagery

Savagery is another of the identified stereotypical ways Native peoples are portrayed included in Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) framework. While most books in the sample are neutral in relation to this portrayal, four books overtly portray Native characters with some savagery: Aloian's (2010), Demi's (2012), Gunderson's (2014), and Macdonald's (2014). The most disappointing of these three books is Demi's. Demi's art speaks more loudly than words in their savage depiction of Native peoples. One page describes how the Caribs retaliated against the Spaniards because they were "angered by the way the Spanish mistreated them" (n.p.), and the art accompanying these words is damaging. Instead of showing the mistreatment of the Caribs, it shows a bloodied scene of Natives spearing, clubbing, shooting arrows at, and using an ax on defenseless Spaniards, including religious figures. The text accompanying the art relates that the Caribs "murdered" the Spaniards (n.p.). A few pages later "mistreatment" of the Natives is visually represented, depicting one Spaniard stabbing a Native (no blood is shown) while other Natives carry bundles or materials while forced to work. There is a child lying on the ground, but it is not clear why (n.p.). In comparing these two images, the one showing Natives retaliating against the Spanish has a dark and brooding background, with literal blood splatter across the page. The second image depicting the enslavement of the Natives is bright, with a sunny, tropical background. Stereotypical portrayals of savage Natives in children's picture books do nothing to educate readers on the lives and experiences of Native people, and it is especially offensive if the enslavement and brutal treatment many Natives suffered under Columbus is considered.

Children “Playing Indian” and Ridiculous Names

Happily, two stereotypical portrayals of Native peoples -- stereotypes in children’s play and stereotypes in naming -- outlined by Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez (1992) are hardly present in any of the books in the sample. None of the books feature fictitious, ridiculous names of Native characters. One book, *You Wouldn’t Want to Sail with Christopher Columbus* by Macdonald (2014) features a child “playing Indian.” A white explorer boy in Native paint is shown with the caption, “Be like the Taino people - cover your face and body with paint to keep mosquitoes away” (p. 23). The paint on the boy includes red stripes across his eyes and chest, and around his lips like lipstick. The boy appears embarrassed or sheepish in the picture. In Macdonald's book, the fact about paint deterring mosquitoes could have been added without including art that trivialized the matter. Besides Macdonald, no other books in the sample depict children dressing up as Natives.

Research Question 2: Portrayal of Native Culture

Alive vs. Extinct Cultures

Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez’s (1992) category, stereotypes as savages, primitive, and extinct, asks readers to assess if Natives and their cultures are displayed as extinct, or conversely, as alive. More books portrayed Native cultures as extinct rather than as alive today. Only 3 of the 21 (14.3%) books sampled discuss modern Native culture in some detail: *Columbus Day* (Aloian, 2010), *Days of Change: Columbus Reaches the New World* (Bodden, 2010), and *The Story of Our Holidays: Columbus Day* (Ponto, 2017). Bodden’s book was recommended by the *Children’s Core Collection* (2020) and includes some of the best information about modern Native culture. Bodden discusses *mestizos*, people of blended origin with Spanish and Native

roots (pp. 44-47), showing readers that Native culture is not extinct. One quote explains, “Today, the mestizo culture is celebrated in many parts of Latin America on *Dia de la Raza*, or Day of the Race” (p. 47). A few other books (DeRubertis, 2014; Carr, 2015; Baby Professor, 2017) show a picture of a modern Native American in traditional dress, but it is unremarkable, undetailed, explained poorly, and does little to reinforce the idea that Native culture is alive today.

Even though *Who Was Christopher Columbus* by Baby Professor (2017) shows a picture of a modern Native American, it also offers a particularly poor representation of modern Native cultures by stating, “We have ruins of cities, complete with inscriptions on stones that we do not know how to read” (n.p.) and offering no further detail. This ultimately leads readers to the idea that Native cultures are extinct. The most frequent occurrence perpetuating the idea of Native American extinction is the complete lack of any information about Native culture. 10 of the 21 (47.7%) books sampled do not discuss Native culture in any way (see Table 3). This complete lack of detail makes it seem like Native cultures are extinct and do not thrive today.

Table 3

The Discussion of Native Culture in Book Sample

Book Authors Organized by Score	Score	No Native Culture Discussed, Ancient or Modern	Some Ancient Native Culture Discussed	Modern Native Culture Discussed
Baily (2008)**	-6		✓	
Aloian (2010)	-5		✓	✓
Dayton (2012)	-4	✓		
Nelson (2010)	-4	✓		
Wade (2015)	-4	✓		
Macdonald (2014)	-3		✓	
Petersen (2019)	-3	✓		
Rajczak (2015)*	-3	✓		
Baby Professor (2017)	-2		✓	
Carr (2015)	-2	✓		
Donohue (2013)	-2	✓		
Hunter (2015)	-2	✓		
Ponto	-2		✓	✓
Demi (2012)**	-1		✓	
DeRubertis (2014)*	-1	✓		
Gunderson (2014)*	-1		✓	
Keller (2013)	0	✓		
Leavitt (2008)	3		✓	
Bodden (2010)**	6		✓	✓
O'Brien (2014)	6		✓	
Kallen (2018)*	7		✓	

** Denotes books recommended by Ebsco's Children's Core Collection

* Denotes books with positive reviews in TitleWave (books with negative reviews were not selected for the sample)

No star denotes books without reviews but present in TitleWave search results

Complex vs. Simple Societies

Another part of Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) category, stereotypes as savages, primitive, or extinct, also asks the reader to consider if Native characters are depicted as, "simple tribal people" or "members of highly defined and complex societies." Only 11 out of 21 (52.3%) books sampled discuss Native culture and societies (ancient or modern) in some capacity, and 10 do not discuss it at all (see Table 3). Of those, 4 of 11 portray the complexities of Native societies and discuss it in more detail. Books by Leavitt (2008), Bodden (2010), O'Brien (2014), and Kallen (2018) all discuss Native society in a way that demonstrates its complexities. O'Brien's book does one of the best jobs in demonstrating aspects of complex Native society. O'Brien discusses Native language (p. 6), Taino innovations (p. 13), foods (p. 16-17), various tribes (pp. 18-19), and government (p. 18). On government, O'Brien writes: "He [Columbus] believed that they [Tainos] were uncivilized, but they had a complex society. Chiefs called *caciques* led Taino *caciquats*, or kingdoms. The *caciques* lived in large huts in the centers of their villages" (p. 18). O'Brien is also the only author among the sample who discusses specific influential Taino people. Caonabo, described as a "rebel leader," is mentioned for fighting back against the Spaniards for his people. And Caonabo's wife, Anacaona, is said to be a "famous composer of native ballads" (p. 20). These details of people who lived in a complex society gives readers a sense of the normal but remarkable lives of the Taino, instead of eliciting the idea that the Taino are unimportant, ancient people who lived simple and unremarkable lives.

In contrast to a demonstration of complex societies, there was either no mention of Native culture and society at all (see Table 3) or a brief mention of Native society without much detail

provided. Baby Professor's (2017) book, for example, talks only about plants the Taino grew and their relationship to European trade (n.p.). While plants and trade are a part of society, this is an especially limited view of what the entire society looked like. Other books, like Bailey's (2008), mention an innovation of the Taino's, like the hammock (p. 28), but provide little more about Taino society. A theme that emerged from these books is that the few details provided about Native culture related it to European use in some way. This suggests to readers that Taino culture is not important or unique outside of how it impacted Europeans.

Accurate Portrayals of Religion vs. Superstitious Portrayals of Religion

Another category of Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) tool entitled, culture - distortion and religion, focused on the portrayal of Native religion. In their evaluative tool, they asked: "Are religions described as 'superstitious,' with backward or primitive connotations? Or, are Indian religions and traditions described accurately, in the context of their civilizations?" (p. 18). There were two (9.5%) books found to represent Taino religion in a spiritual and accurate way with some detail, and four (19%) were found to represent Taino beliefs as superstitious. The majority of books do not discuss Taino religion at all. Some mention that the Taino had a religion but provide no further detail. The two books that discuss Taino religion positively and in some detail are Bodden's (2010) and Kallen's (2018). Kallen's has the most detailed descriptions, discussing and showing pictures of Taino religious items. Kallen writes: "*Duho* seats were made and used by Taino people around the time of Columbus's arrival. This kind of seat had special meaning to the Taino. Chiefs used duhos to communicate with the spirit world, which helped them make important decisions for the people" (p. 17). This description is accompanied by a picture of a duho. Kallen's book also provides a picture of carvings,

explaining that they represent Taino gods. Bodden's book specifically mentions names of Taino gods. Kallen and Bodden both demonstrate respect for Taino religion, sending readers a message of their importance.

Four books, Bailey's (2008), Leavitt's (2008), Demi's (2012), and Rajczak's (2015), represent Taino religious beliefs as superstitious or make the Taino look stupid in their spiritual beliefs. Of the books studied, three of the four books that represent Taino beliefs as superstitious use the same occurrence to do so: An eclipse that Columbus predicted to force Tainos to help him. Not all books in the sample that mention this occurrence make the Tainos look superstitious or stupid. Some use words like "tricked" or "manipulated" to describe Columbus's actions. Baily, Demi, and Rajczak, however, make the Taino look ridiculous in their beliefs. In his book, Rajczak describes the situation as: "In 1504, Christopher was stranded in Jamaica. The natives wouldn't help him. Remembering that a lunar eclipse was due, he said they had angered his god. When a red moon rose, they became fearful and agreed to help" (p. 18). This is the only mention of Taino beliefs (that gods could be angered) in Rajczak's entire book, making the Taino look stupid and superstitious. No other aspect of Taino culture is mentioned in Rajczak's book, creating an even more damaging image of Tainos through the absence of information. When books use Columbus's manipulation tactics as a way to make him look superior to Tainos, readers receive the message that the Tainos were easily controlled because of their superstitious spiritual beliefs.

Uniqueness vs. Sameness of Different Tribes

Another evaluative point described by Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez (1992) was the distinction or generality between different tribes, entitled stereotypes in generalizations. The

majority of books in the sample do not discuss various Native tribes, although two (9.5%) books discuss various tribes and emphasize their uniqueness, and another two present complete generalizations between various Native tribes. Bodden (2010) and O'Brien (2014) make a point to discuss various tribes and emphasize their uniqueness. O'Brien includes the best example, discussing tribes near the Taino on a two-page spread. O'Brien features the Taino, Carib, Ciguayos, and Lucayan tribes, giving information about each of them separately (pp. 18-19). This attention to detail reminds readers of the vast number of Native tribes, all with their own culture and way of life.

Aloian's (2010) and Hunter's (2015) books generalize Native cultures. Hunter's book has the most overt demonstration by showing a picture of an Incan pyramid (in a book featuring Tainos) and stating, "Europeans explored and settled in many parts of North and South America. They often fought with the people who were already living in the Americas" (p. 5). Since this book offers little information about Tainos (only that Columbus treated them poorly and that they introduced Europeans to potatoes), it is especially overgeneralized to show an Incan pyramid among the limited information. Hunter's book does little to discuss Incan or Taino culture, and instead gives readers the impression that the Tainos, Incans, and other Natives of the Americas were the same.

Narrative Tone

Narrative tone spans both Research Question 1 and 2 about the portrayal of Native characters and culture. The remaining categories of Slapin, Seale and Gonzalez (1992) are reported here.

Bias and Eurocentric Focuses

Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez (1992) address bias in their authenticity category, by asking, “is there an ethnocentric bias which leads to distortions or omissions?” (p. 28) and in their tenth category, asking about Eurocentric focuses in the portrayal of Native culture. There is a split in the book sample regarding these categories. Among the books sampled, 12 (57.2%) are biased, celebrating Columbus and minimizing Native experiences or focusing on material aspects of Native society, while 9 (42.8%) discuss Columbus and Natives in a balanced way (see Table 4). Not surprisingly, books about Columbus Day tend to have a Western bias. Carr’s (2015) book, for example, discusses how a person can celebrate Columbus Day and mentions only one sentence about Native peoples: “Columbus Day was meant to honor the American Indians and the many Italians who later came to America” (p. 11). This sentence alone may not show bias, but the following information in the book does. The book talks about how people can celebrate Italians and mentions nothing further about Native peoples and their cultures or how to celebrate them. Instead, readers learn: “People celebrate Italian American culture. They eat Italian foods such as pasta and crusty bread ... people wave Italian flags ... This is a way for Italian Americans to show pride in their heritage” (pp. 15, 17, 21). While explaining celebrations of Italian culture is not bad, it is biased to focus so much on this aspect without talking about Native peoples in a book about Columbus Day.

One category of Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez’s (1992) tool pertained to Eurocentric focuses in the portrayal of Native culture. They ask: “Is there an ethnocentric Western focus on material objects, such as baskets, pottery, rugs? Or does the writer show any understanding of the

relationship between material and nonmaterial aspects of life?” (p. 19). Books that talk only of Taino goods as they relate to trade and the economy or European use scored poorly in this category. Books that discuss trade *and* additional aspects of Taino culture were not scored negatively. Bailey’s (2008), Leavitt’s (2008), Keller’s (2013), Gunderson’s (2014), Baby Professor’s (2017), and Ponto’s (2017) books discuss material objects without showing an understanding of the relationship between material and nonmaterial aspects of Taino life and therefore scored poorly in this category (see Table 4).

Books that made an effort to have a balanced telling of events (see Table 4) usually discuss the suffering and harsh treatment Native people suffered under Columbus’s actions. Instead of celebrating how brave or adventurous Columbus was, some authors chose to include the truth about Columbus’s actions and the controversy around Columbus Day. Bodden’s (2010) book is a great example of this. Bodden features a quote from Wilma Mankiller, the first female chief of the Cherokee Nation: “People have to realize that many Native Americans view America’s worshipping Columbus as an insult. Even though the comparison may seem strange to some, many see him as a pre-colonial-day Hitler. He not only stripped Native Americans of their land, but their culture and livelihood” (p. 7). Not all books in the sample are as straight-forward with this issue as Bodden’s, but many address Columbus’s actions in a kid-friendly way.

Table 4

The Appearance of Bias and Western Focus in Book Sample

Book Authors Organized by Score	Score	Bias	Western Focus on Material Aspects
Baily (2008)**	-6	✓	✓
Aloian (2010)	-5	✓	
Dayton (2012)	-4	✓	
Nelson (2010)	-4	✓	
Wade (2015)	-4		
Macdonald (2014)	-3		
Petersen (2019)	-3	✓	
Rajczak (2015)*	-3	✓	
Baby Professor (2017)	-2		✓
Carr (2015)	-2	✓	
Donohue (2013)	-2		
Hunter (2015)	-2		
Ponto (2017)	-2		✓
Demi (2012)**	-1		
DeRubertis (2014)*	-1		
Gunderson (2014)*	-1		✓
Keller (2013)	0		✓
Leavitt (2008)	3		✓
Bodden (2010)**	6		
O'Brien (2014)	6		
Kallen (2018)*	7		

** Denotes books recommended by Ebsco's Children's Core Collection

* Denotes books with positive reviews in TitleWave (books with negative reviews were not selected for the sample)

No star denotes books without reviews but present in TitleWave search results

Respectful Language

Another two of Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) categories pertained to respectful language (loaded words) and tone (culture - narrative tone). The majority of the books sampled, 15 of 21 (71.45), discuss Native cultures and peoples with respect. A disappointing total of six (28.6%) have undertones of disrespect to Native peoples and/or their culture. Aloian (2010) writes that the Natives were perceived as "uncivilized" and does not offer another view or counterargument (p. 12). Bailey (2008) includes a young character calling Natives "hostile" and adults in the book do not correct this (p. 33). Donohue's (2013) and Ponto's (2017) books repeatedly refer to the Taino as "Indians" even though both point out that Columbus mistakenly named them because he thought he was in India, and Wade (2015) calls the Taino "poor" (p. 21). Wade's description is particularly insulting because it is one of only two details about the Taino in the entire book. Macdonald's (2014) book does not use insulting adjectives but attempts humor that could easily be perceived as mocking or making fun of Native culture, saying things like: "Tobacco - Taino people on the nearby island of Cuba breathe its smoke. Ugh!" (p. 22), and "Iguana - These green, meaty lizards are best roasted. Are you hungry enough to eat one?" (p. 22). Macdonald's book also contains insulting undertones when it mentions that the Caribs were thought to be cannibals and includes a picture of a Native stirring a cauldron with a malicious facial expression, comparable to a wicked witch (p. 26). Disrespectful and insulting portrayals such as these give readers completely damaging accounts of Natives and their cultures.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This qualitative content analysis study's purpose was to analyze how Native peoples and their cultures are represented in 21 children's picture books published between 2008-2019, targeting students in grades K-4, about Christopher Columbus or Columbus Day. The books were evaluated using Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez's (1992) framework: "How to Tell the Difference: A Checklist for Evaluating Children's Books for Anti-Indian Bias." Books in the sample do not represent Native peoples well, with only four books having positive and detailed representations overall, or scores of 1 or more on a the 11-point scale the researcher designed based on existing frameworks for analysis. The most common offense in the sample is a stereotypical portrayal of Native people. This study concludes that *Children's Core* (2020) recommendations and *TitleWave* (2020) reviews cannot be solely relied on to provide books that accurately represent Native peoples. Librarians and educators should seek additional tools to find quality representations of Native peoples in literature. This is even more imperative if books about Columbus are going to be added to libraries and classrooms despite our updated understanding of his role in the tyranny of colonization.

Conclusions

Themes in the Representation of Native Peoples and Their Culture

This study noted three distinct themes that emerged from the analysis of the research regarding the representation of Native peoples and their culture: (1) the problematic use of historic art, (2) the lack of information about Native culture included in books about Columbus, and (3) the focus of authors' research solely on Columbus, to the exclusion of Natives. The first

theme that arose was the use of problematic historic art. This study found that the biggest offense in the negative representation of Native peoples came through stereotypical portrayals, mostly through tokenism demonstrated in historic art. Even in the case of illustrators creating their own art, however, there are still instances of stereotypical portrayals and tokenism. If books had not used certain artistic pieces, they wouldn't have scored as poorly. In some cases, books scored negatively in tokenism and generic Native designs because of the same piece of art. Stereotypical portrayal through tokenism was the biggest offender by far, with 16 of the 21 books displaying it.

Another theme from this study's data was the poor or nonexistent depiction of Native culture in books about Columbus. Almost half the books in the sample (10 of 21) did not discuss Native culture in any way, while others mentioned brief details about crops or hammocks and nothing more. Only four books were found to represent Native culture in ways showing its complexities. Sadly, this study found that Native culture was not a topic researched by authors or frequently written about in books. Even in books about Columbus, it is important to discuss and represent Native culture in an accurate way.

A third theme that emerged from this study's analysis was that even though many books had clearly researched information before writing, the evidence of such research indicates that it pertained only to Columbus and not to the Native characters who were also featured. Demi's (2012) book, for example, demonstrates extensive research on Christopher Columbus and his life, but scored negatively in this study because of the overall representation of Native people. Other books made clear efforts to tell an unbiased account of how Columbus treated Natives, but they still scored poorly because of their overall representation of Native characters. Ponto's (2017) book includes details about modern Natives and their protests of Columbus Day, but the

historical representation of Native characters is stereotypical. Only 4 of 21 books (the ones that scored positively) demonstrated complete research of Columbus and the Natives he encountered.

Selection Tools are Only the First Step

A theme that emerged pertaining to this study's selection tools was that books recommended by *Ebsco's Children's Core Collection* (2020) and with positive reviews in *TitleWave* (2020) do not necessarily contain accurate, positive representations of Native peoples and their culture. Disappointingly, two of three books recommended by the *Core* scored negatively, and three out of four books with positive reviews in *TitleWave* scored negatively. Books in this study's sample recommended by the *Children's Core* or with positive reviews in *TitleWave* may have received accolades for their representation of Columbus, but attention wasn't necessarily paid to the representation of Native peoples. There were five out of seven (71.4%) books recommended by the *Core* or with positive reviews in *TitleWave* that represented Native peoples in a stereotypical way, and two out of seven (28.5%) had a Western bias or focus. Only two books recommended by the *Core* or with positive reviews in *TitleWave* scored positively overall (see Table 5). It should also be noted that neither the *Children's Core Collection* nor *TitleWave* featured Native authors in their search results about Columbus or Columbus Day. No books in the study were written by Native people. This study concludes that overall, *Ebsco's Children's Core Collection* and *TitleWave* reviews cannot be solely relied on to provide books with accurate representations of Native peoples and their culture in books about Columbus or Columbus Day.

Table 5

Scores of Core Collection and Positively Reviewed TitleWave Books and their Negative Representations

Book Authors Organized by Score	Core Collection or TitleWave Recommendation	Score	No Native Culture Discussed	Western Bias and/or Focus	Depicts Natives Stereotypically (Tokenism, Savagery, etc.)	Disrespectful Language
Baily (2008)	Listed as “Supplementary” by Core Collection	-6			✓	✓
Rajczak (2015)	Positive Review(s) in TitleWave	-3	✓	✓		
Demi (2012)	Listed as “Core” by Core Collection	-1			✓	
DeRubertis (2014)	Positive Review(s) in TitleWave	-1	✓		✓	
Gunderson (2014)	Positive Review(s) in TitleWave	-1		✓	✓	
Bodden (2010)	Listed as “Core” by Core Collection	6			✓	
Kallen (2018)	Positive Review(s) in TitleWave	7				

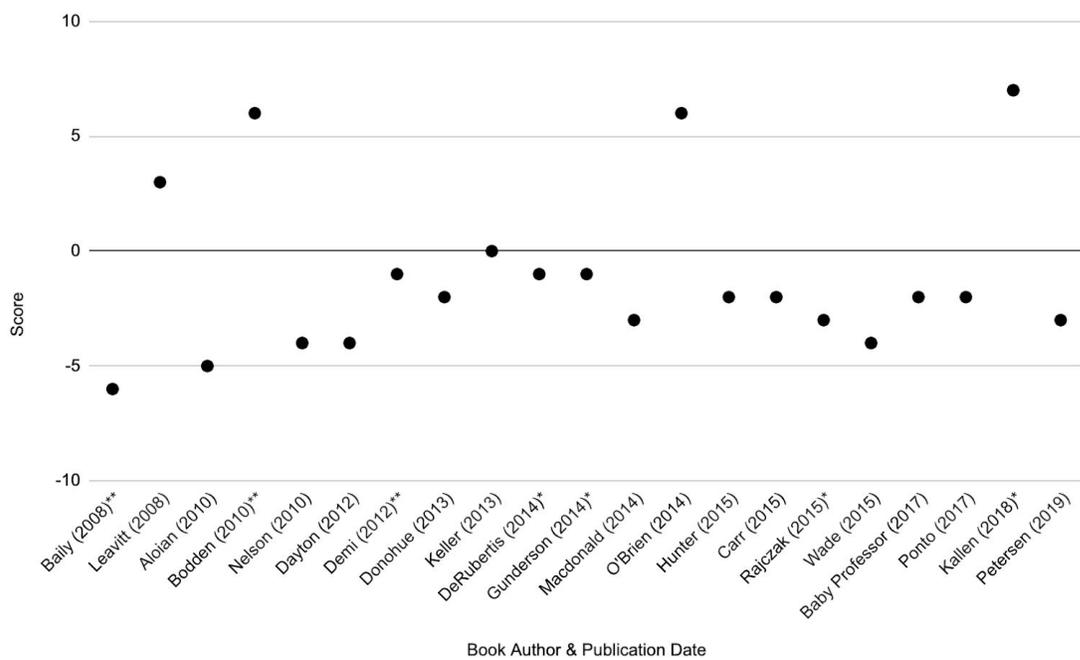
Publication Dates did not Impact the Quality of Representation

Another theme that arose while analyzing the data was that recent publication dates did not positively impact the quality of representation of Native peoples. Overall, there was no direct connection between publication date and score. Instead, books stood out because of their positive representation in a range of dates: 2008, 2010, 2014, and 2018. These high scoring books appear among other low scoring books published at that time. What emerges is a pattern of books with poor or sub-par representations of Native peoples (scoring in the -6 to 0 range) and a handful of

books from a wide date range that break away from the norm and represent Native peoples and their culture in a more accurate and complete way. This sample of books shows little to no steady improvement of the overall representation of Native peoples in children's picture books about Christopher Columbus or Columbus Day over the last 10 years. See Figure 2 for a visual representation of this information.

Figure 2

Score Relationship to Publication Date



** Denotes books recommended by Ebsco's Children's Core Collection

* Denotes books with positive reviews in TitleWave (books with negative reviews were not selected for the sample)

No star denotes books without reviews but present in TitleWave search results

Recommendations

Recommendations for Librarians and Educators

In books about Christopher Columbus, librarians and educators need to pay attention not only to how Columbus and his life is represented, but also to how Native peoples and their lives are represented. Perhaps it should be decided to not use books about Columbus or Columbus Day at all, given their propensity to misrepresent Native peoples. Instead, librarians and educators could create their own lessons about Columbus and Columbus Day featuring more accurate content.

The four books from this sample that had accurate representations and balanced information overall (signified by their positive score) are as follows:

What's So Great About Christopher Columbus by Leavitt (2008)

Days of Change: Columbus Reaches the New World by Bodden (2010)

Explore with Christopher Columbus by O'Brien (2014)

A Journey with Christopher Columbus: Primary Source Explorers by Kallen (2018)

This study deems these four titles to represent Native peoples in an accurate and positive way overall, though it should be noted that some are not without flaws. Bodden's book, for example, uses a historic painting that demonstrates tokenism. If books about Columbus are needed, however, these four are the best of the sample. Teachers and librarians are highly cautioned against using books from this sample if they scored less than 1, because of their poor or sub-par representation of Native peoples and their cultures. Books like these can perpetuate the idea that Native cultures are extinct and can reinforce Native stereotypes that educators should be actively

fighting against. See Table 6 for a list of 17 books from this study’s sample to avoid in classrooms and to weed from libraries.

Table 6

Books that Represented Natives Poorly Overall

Book Authors Organized by Score	Score	No Native Culture Discussed	Western Bias and/or Focus	Depicts Natives Stereotypically (Tokenism, Savagery, etc.)	Disrespectful Language/Tone
Baily (2008)	-6			✓	✓
Aloian (2010)	-5		✓	✓	✓
Dayton (2012)	-4	✓	✓	✓	
Nelson (2010)	-4	✓	✓	✓	
Wade (2015)	-4	✓		✓	✓
Macdonald (2014)	-3			✓	✓
Petersen (2019)	-3	✓	✓	✓	
Rajczak (2015)	-3	✓	✓		
Baby Professor (2017)	-2		✓	✓	
Carr (2015)	-2	✓	✓		
Donohue (2013)	-2	✓		✓	✓
Hunter (2015)	-2			✓	
Ponto (2017)	-2		✓	✓	✓
Demi (2012)	-1			✓	
DeRubertis (2014)	-1	✓		✓	
Gunderson (2014)	-1		✓	✓	

For review of future purchases of books pertaining in some way to Native peoples, librarians and educators should use evaluative tools like Slapin, Seale, and Gonzalez’s (1992) “How to Tell the Difference: A Checklist for Evaluating Children’s Books for Anti-Indian Bias.” Another particularly good evaluative tool focusing on Native culture is, “The Native Cultures Authenticity Guide,” used in Sanchez’s (2001) research (see Appendix B). Books featuring

Native characters that have been purchased newly or in the past should be evaluated using tools like these. If books are found to unsatisfactorily represent Native peoples, librarians and educators should seriously consider recycling them. As supported by Thompson (2001), Slapin & Seale (1992, 2005), and Quigley (2016), books perpetuating stereotypes of Native peoples can be more damaging than they are worth keeping.

Furthermore, librarians and educators can seek resources to consult for future purchases that are known to focus on excellence in Native American literature and diversity. Meyer (2011) suggests the use of *The Broken Flute* (Slapin & Seale, 2005) and *Lessons from Turtle Island: Native Curriculum in Early Childhood Classrooms* (Jones & Moomaw, 2002) to help determine quality literature of Native characters and themes. McNair (2016) suggests librarians and educators keep up with the American Indian Youth Award to ensure books with better Native representation are included in libraries and classrooms, as well as consulting *Hornbook* (The Horn Book, Inc., 2020) and *The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* (Stevenson, 2020) as professional publications that spotlight diversity in general. Both Meyer and McNair suggest using the online resource *Oyate* (2020). *Oyate* features material about Native Americans for purchase, and includes book reviews.

Recommendations for Publishers and Authors

Publishers and authors creating or publishing books about Christopher Columbus, Columbus Day, or any topic involving Native peoples need to take authenticity and research into account. This study has shown the biggest offender of stereotypical representations of Native peoples came in the form of art. With this knowledge, authors and publishers need to seriously consider hiring illustrators who have researched Native peoples and can depict them visually in a

culturally and historically accurate way. If books about Columbus and Columbus Day must be published, it is essential for better art to be created instead of reusing historic art that typically depicts Native peoples stereotypically or with tokenism. Additionally, scholars could guide publishers and authors to use art that has been deemed to depict Native peoples in historically and culturally accurate ways.

Furthermore, publishers need to seek authors of Native descent who have the authority to tell Native perspectives and counter-stories about topics like Columbus. It is important to expose students to diverse and authentic perspectives, and to expose students to books that highlight Native perspectives. It is essential that authors writing about Columbus do thorough research, not only about Columbus and his life, but also about the Natives he encountered. If books about Columbus and Columbus Day must be published, authors need to be aware of how they represent Native peoples and their cultures.

Future Studies

Further study on the matter of Native representation in picture books about Columbus or Columbus day would be beneficial. This study was limited by its use of only two selection tools used by librarians: *Ebsco's Children's Core Collection* (2020) and *TitleWave* by Follett (2020). It would benefit the educational community for books about Columbus written by Native people (if any exist) or recommended by Native organizations (like Oyate) to be analyzed and compared to the data in this study. Another suggestion for future research would be to compare books by the same publishers of books in this study, but for which the topic is Native peoples, rather than the topic being Columbus or Columbus Day, to see if there are differences in the representations of Native peoples. It would also be beneficial to investigate the same topic over the next 10 years

to see if there has been improvement in the overall representation of Native peoples in newly published books about Columbus or Columbus Day. And finally, further study should be conducted about whether Columbus Day as a holiday should be taught in schools at all.

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APPENDIX A

EVALUATION TOOL

ADAPTED FROM: HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE: A CHECKLIST FOR
EVALUATING CHILDREN'S BOOKS FOR ANTI-INDIAN BIAS (Slapin, Seale, & Gonzalez,
1992)

Theme or Category	Slapin's Checklist	Code Score	Notes/ Explanation
Stereotypes in children's play	Are children "playing Indian" or are animals dressed as "Indians"?	If so, -1	
Stereotypes in naming	Do "Indians" have ridiculous names, like "Indian Two Feet," or "Little Chief"?	If so, -1	
Stereotypes as savages, primitive, or extinct	<p>Are Native peoples portrayed as savages, or primitive craftspeople, or simple tribal people, now extinct?</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Are Native peoples shown as human beings, members of highly defined and complex societies?</p>	<p>If so, -1</p> <p>If so, +1</p>	
Stereotypes in generalizations	<p>Are Native cultures oversimplified and generalized? Are Native people all one color, one style?</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Are Native cultures presented as separate from each other, with each culture, language, religion, dress, unique?</p>	<p>If so, -1</p> <p>If so, +1</p>	
Stereotypes in art	Is the art a mishmash of "generic Indian" designs?	If so, -1	

	<p>Or</p> <p>Is attention paid to accurate, appropriate design and color; are clothes, dress, houses drawn with careful attention to detail?</p>	If so, +1	
Loaded Words	<p>Are there insulting overtones to the language in the book? Are racist adjectives used to refer to Indian peoples?</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Is the language respectful?</p>	<p>If so, -1</p> <p>If so, +1</p>	
Tokenism	<p>Are Native people depicted as stereotypically alike, or do they look just like whites with brown faces?</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Are Native people depicted as genuine individuals?</p>	<p>If so, -1</p> <p>If so +1</p>	
Culture - narrative tone	<p>Are Native cultures presented in a condescending manner? Are there paternalistic distinctions between "them" and "us"?</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Is the focus on respect for Native peoples and understanding of the sophistication and complexity of their societies?</p>	<p>If so, -1</p> <p>If so, +1</p>	

APPENDIX B

ADDITIONAL EVALUATIVE TOOL

THE NATIVE CULTURES AUTHENTICITY GUIDE (Sanchez, 2001)

The First Great Value: Generosity and Sharing

1. Are there many bounties of Mother Earth shared?
2. Do the Native American characters share their personal possessions?
3. Do they give/share selflessly and freely for the benefit of others?
4. Are they presented as uniquely separate individuals or members of the group?
5. Are they encouraged by family, friends, tribe, and so on to develop and share their talents for the benefit of others?
6. Are children portrayed as “being taken care of” by family, relatives, and nonrelatives?

The Second Great Value: Respect for the Elderly and Women

1. Are male/female elders shown proper respect for their wisdom?
2. Are elders portrayed as appropriate role models with whom the younger can identify?
3. Are the younger depicted learning from the elders, especially through storytelling?
4. Are elders portrayed speaking to the younger without interruption?
5. Are women depicted as integral and important instead of detached and subservient mothers and wives?

The Third Great Value: Getting Along with Nature

1. Are Native Americans depicted representing the sacred natural harmony of and with nature without the stereotype of being “compulsively ecological”?
2. Is it properly depicted that the land was forcibly taken away from them?
3. Is the humanness of Native Americans recognized, namely, laughing, playing games, enjoying life with family and friends, the extended family unit teaching love and responsibility, and so on?
4. Is a language of respect utilized, namely, avoidance of offensive and stereotypic terminology?
5. Are they portrayed as speaking “broken” English?
6. Are there references to entities possessing a spirit or power to be respected?
7. Is spirituality respectfully portrayed, or is it referred to as superstitious, meaningless, or trivialized ceremonies, dances, songs, or “war-whoops”?
8. Are they depicted with a wide range of physical features, avoiding the “Red Man in braids” stereotype?
9. Are they dressed in authentic garb, or all they all wearing feathers and breechcloths regardless of the culture?
10. Are they dressed in modern mainstream garb, depending on the setting?
11. Do they have stereotyped surnames or authentic translations, including “European” names?

12. Are ceremonial artifacts correctly depicted and explained, such as fetishes, medicine bundles, the wearing of turquoise and silver, the medicine pipe (not “peace pipe”), sand paintings, and so on?
13. Are they portrayed eating a variety of foods and using utensils or just their hands?
14. Is accurate information provided about dwellings (hogans, long houses, tipis, wickiups, wigwams, etc.), duties of adults and children, ceremonies (the Sun Dance, the Green Corn Dance, the Mixed Kachina Dance, etc.) and practices (the passage to adulthood, healing ceremonies, etc.)?
15. Are they portrayed as contemporary people and not a past people who vanished and no longer exist?

The Fourth Great Value: Individual Freedom and Leadership

1. Are Native Americans portrayed as freely choosing an action for the benefit of others?
2. Are they depicted accepting responsibility for the consequences of a chosen action or decision?
3. Is the leadership of the tribe properly depicted via the power of the tribal council (and the important role that women usually played in it) and multiple chiefs?

The Fifth Great Value: Courage

1. Is the courage of individuals heroically depicted as an individual choice and effort to give to one’s people, or is it referred to as “fanciful, savage, massacre,” and so on?
2. Are they humble in their exploits, never personally boasting?
3. Are they portrayed as stoic, not expressing emotion (unless around strangers), and perpetuating the always serious stereotype?
4. Do they show a proper reverence for the gift of life?
5. Is there a distorted impression that non-Natives brought a “superior” civilization to the “inferior” Native Americans, thus demeaning Native cultures and omitting their achievements and contributions?

Additional Considerations

1. Is the author(s) identified as a true Native American?
2. Is there evidence that the non-Native author(s) consulted a Native American?
3. Do the illustrations and/or photographs accurately reflect specific tribal/cultural traditions, symbols, and/or art forms?